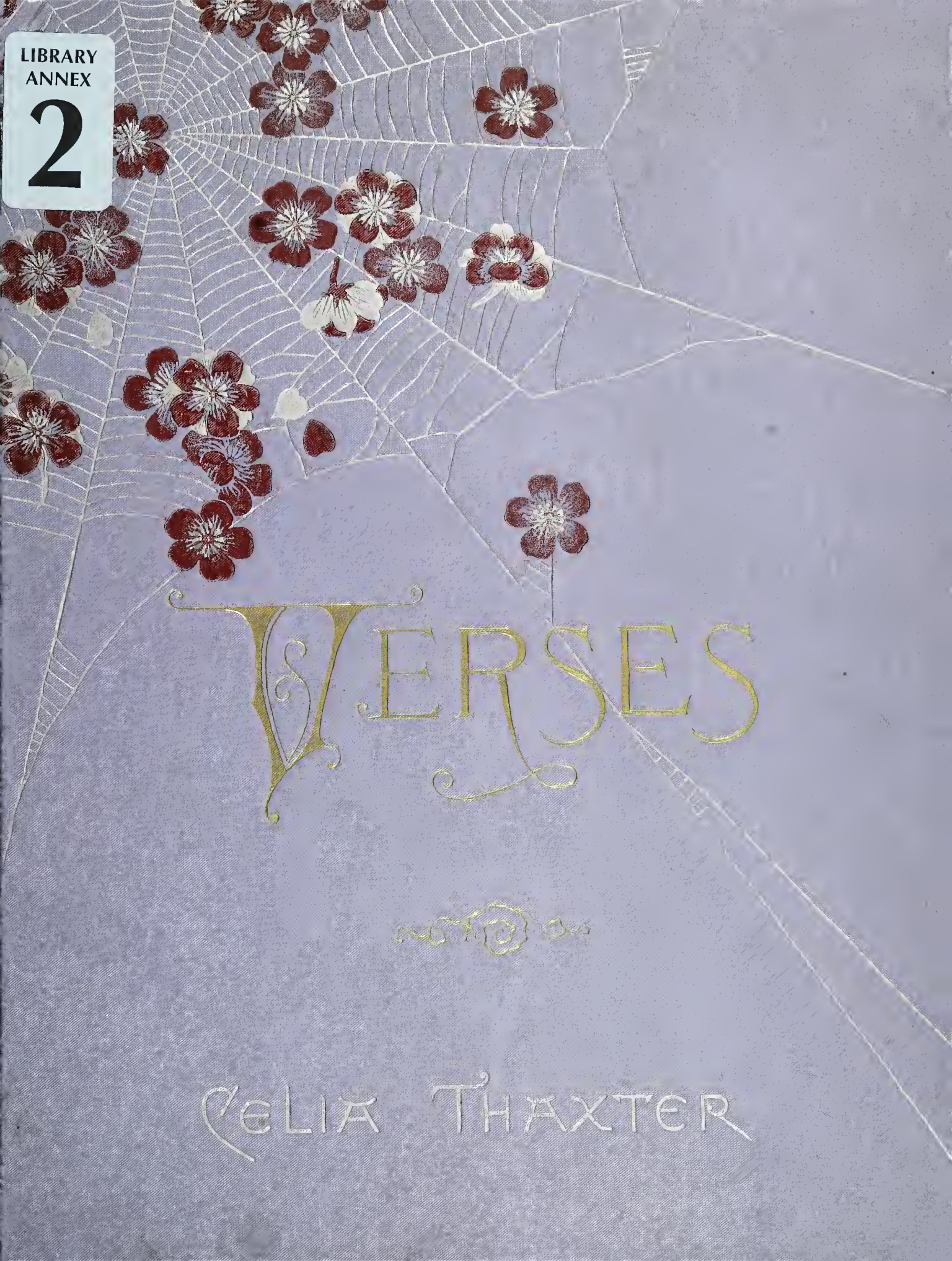


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ANNEX

2

The background of the book cover is a light purple or lavender color with a subtle, embossed spiderweb pattern. Scattered across the upper left and middle sections are several small, five-petaled flowers in a deep red or maroon color, each with a white center. The title 'VERSES' is printed in a large, ornate, gold-colored serif font, with the 'V' being particularly decorative and large.

VERSES

no. 10

CELIA THAXTER

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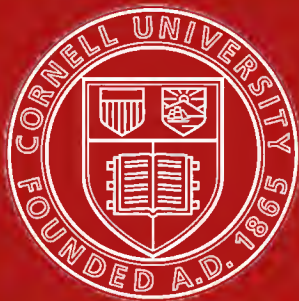
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VERSES

BY

CELIA THAXTER

WITH TWENTY-FIVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY FAMOUS ARTISTS

BOSTON

D LOTHROP COMPANY

WASHINGTON STREET OPPOSITE BROMFIELD

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CONTENTS.

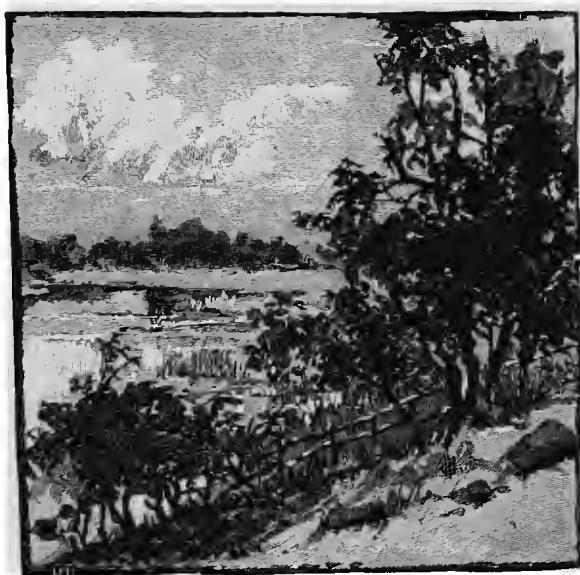
- I. THE FAVORITE FLOWER.
- II. THE TRAINING OF A PRINCE.
- III. FEEDING THE DOVES.
- IV. LOST.
- V. IN HOLLAND.
- VI. COMRADES.
- VII. WILD DUCKS.
- VIII. THE EMPEROR COMMODUS.
- IX. THE WRECK.
- X. ON EASTER DAY.
- XI. CONNOISSEURS.
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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THE DREAM PEDLER	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>
ON QUIET WATERS	<i>E. Parker Hayden</i>



THE FAVORITE FLOWER

THE FAVORITE FLOWER.

O THE warm, sweet, mellow summer noon,
The golden calm and the perfumed air,
The chirp of birds and the locust's croon,
The rich flowers blossoming still and fair.
The old house lies 'mid the swarming leaves
Steeped in sunshine from porch to eaves,
With doors and windows thrown open wide
To welcome the beauty and bloom outside.

Through the gateway and down the walk,
Madge and grandmother, hand in hand
Come with laughter and happy talk,
And here by the marigolds stop and stand.
"What a dear old pleasant place it is!"
Cries the little maid in a trance of bliss,
"Never anywhere could be found
So sweet a garden the whole world round!

"Tell me, grandmother, which do you think
Is the dearest flower for you that grows!
The phlox, or the marigold stars that wink,
Or the larkspur quaint, or the red, red rose?
Which do you love best, grandmother dear?"
And the old dame smiles in the blue eyes clear—
"Of all the flowers I ever possessed,
I think, my precious, I love you best!"



THE TRAINING OF A PRINCE

THE TRAINING OF A PRINCE.

O STRONG young son of a king!

What is it thou shalt not know?

Not only to draw the twanging string

From the perfect curve of the bow,

And straight thine arrow send

To the distant target's heart,

But all good gifts their power would lend, —

Here, the musician's art,

There, hound and horn and hunter bold

The joys of the chase would teach;

The courtier's graces manifold, —

The poet's golden speech, —

All wisdom and knowledge and beauty wait

To make thee noble and crown thy state.

Wilt thou be first in the fight

Among the warriors great?

And will thy hand in the lute delight

Wooing a lovely mate?

Wilt thou rule wisely many a year

With a firm grasp on the helm,

And the ship of the nation safely steer

Though storms would overwhelm?

Be thou thy people's pride and joy,

Wide may thy praises ring,

And growing from the princely boy

To the stature of a king,

Thine arrows of lofty purpose send

Ever straight to the mark, for foe or friend!



FEEDING THE DOVES

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FEEDING THE DOVES.

Coo, coo, my pretty doves, fly lightly here!

See, snowy rice and golden grain I spill!

Come wheeling through the wide air far and near,

Come from the gray old tower and take your fill.

Swell your soft breasts and curve each graceful neck

With rainbows spanned, and ruffle all your plumes
So dainty fine and clean, without a speck,

Lustrous as changing silk from Lyons looms.

Suzette is calling,—there is naught to fear!

Coo, coo, my pretty doves, fly lightly here!

Sure as the constant morning comes Suzette

To bring you food, you know she will not fail,—
Crossing the tender grass all dewy-wet:

Her welcome voice you hear, and down you sail,
Her pets, her pleasures, planting rosy feet

Upon the green and gazing, brilliant-eyed,
Askance up to her face with crooning sweet,

Lifting your shining heads in love and pride:
For all obey her well-known summons dear,
“Coo, coo, my pretty doves, fly lightly here!”



LOST

LOST.

Low burns the sunset and the dark is near:

O where is home! O where my mother's face!
The long night is before me, full of fear;
Of the familiar path there is no trace.
The evening wind blows damp upon my cheek,
The stars begin to twinkle high and clear,
In vain for sign of hope or help I seek,
For all is strange and lone and sad and drear.

No human sound comes to my anxious ear,
No cattle low, no dog barks far away,
Only the ripple of the frogs I hear,
And the thrush singing to the dying day.
Under my feet the sweet fern sprays I crush
With tangled vines and dead leaves brown and sere,
Faint spicy odors rise—a dewy hush
Steals o'er the dusky landscape far and near.

Will never more the lights of home appear?
The blessed lights of home! Where shall I turn,
East, west, north, south, to find a ray of cheer?
Where, in the darkness, do those tapers burn?
Weary, despairing, sorrowful I stray.
How must your heart be aching, mother dear!
O friends who surely seek me, come this way!
O that my cry might reach you! I am *here!*

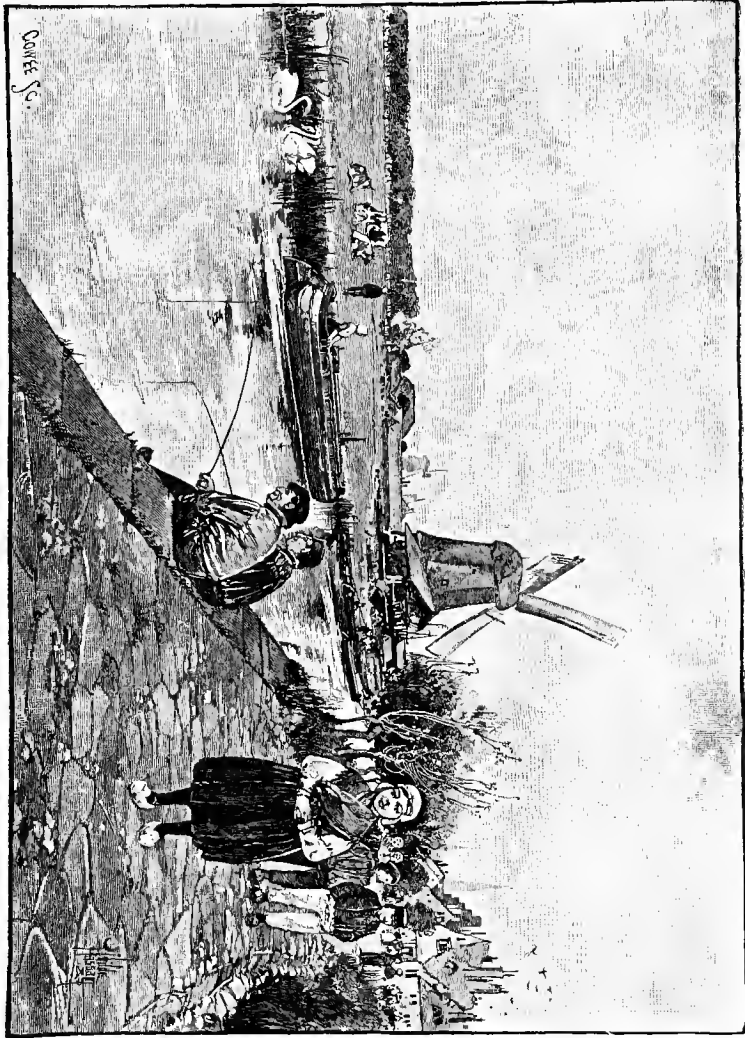


IN HOLLAND

IN HOLLAND.

A LEVEL land, a level, lazy land,
Surely is this, whose waters slip so slow
'Twixt the canal's low banks on either hand,
A stream so drowsy it forgets to flow;
As on a mirror clear the white swans float
With dazzling plumage and with stately grace,
Reluctantly glides past the clumsy boat
Obedient to the horse's lagging pace:
Still as a statue sits its girlish guide
To steer it safe midway the sluggish tide.

The placid Vrouw, round-faced, with costume quaint,
The meditative fishers, and the square,
Phlegmatic Dutchmen plodding, and the faint
Far windmill sails poised motionless in air
Beyond the broad field where the cattle graze,—
Half sleeping, lost in dreams all seem—so still!
And yet what brows bound with immortal bays
This country calm can claim! And what a will
Dwells in the race! Imagination high,
Power, persistence!—Fame that cannot die
Makes glorious the land from whose repose
The fiery star of Rembrandt's genius rose!



COMRADES

COMRADES.

Who that is merciful and wise
Knows not how dumb companions fond
Look up to man with wistful eyes,
Safe held in friendship's sacred bond!
The hound salutes the kindly hand
That has taught him to love and not to fear,
The falcon still on his perch will stand
Listening for well-known voices dear,
And the spaniels watch the lovely boy
Half pleased, half scared at the curious toy.
Mute friends! They are grateful if they may share
In human comfort or human care.

You have had many a beautiful hour,
O comrades faithful and tried and true!
O fair child, ripening to youth's rich flower,
What pleasant fortune has fallen to you!
And grandfather, holding your treasure fast,
More blessed are you than all the rest,
For he brings you afresh the joys of the past,
As the after-glow kindles the fading west.
The happy circle gathers close
In an atmosphere of sweet repose,
Unvexed by word or look austere,
For love is the only ruler here.



WILD DUCKS

WILD DUCKS.

I LIFT my voice to the breeze,
A harsh and broken call,
To mix with the roar of the seas
And the rush of the waterfall;
With noises stormy and rude
I love to mingle my cry,
In the heart of the solitude
Where nothing human is nigh.

When the tempest lashes the wood,
And over the marshland sings,
Then gathers my callow brood
'Neath my mate's protecting wings;
But I, from the edge of the crag,
Launch out on the sweeping gale,
With pinions that never flag,
And a courage that does not quail.

I ride on the heaving brine
That breaks into seething foam,
For the earth and the air are mine,
And the water my buoyant home.
A joyful life I lead,
And I envy no one's lot,
But for one boon I plead —
O mortal, molest me not!



THE EMPEROR COMMODUS

THE EMPEROR COMMODUS.

BASE Emperor, would'st thou show the gaping crowd

Thy brute strength in the guise of Hercules,
Slaying wild beasts while the brass trump blares loud,

And thousands watch thee from the balconies?
Slay first those beasts within thee, that lay waste

Thy body and soul and devastate thy life,
While ruin and rebellion rise and haste

Toward thee, and the land is filled with strife,
And thy wronged people curse thee long and late,
And look on thee with eyes of scorn and hate.

Bear'st thou thyself so proudly, thou that art

So vile within? Wear'st thou such brave attire,
A tiger's cruelty within thy heart,

Unworthy son of a most noble sire!
The wingèd Victory borne after thee

But mocks thee, who art passion's veriest slave;
Thy deeds accursed shall thy accusers be,

And lead thy steps to thy dishonored grave.
Strip off the bays with which thy brow is bound,
For thou shalt be disgraced, despised, discrowned!



THE WRECK

THE WRECK.

So must the heart of love be wrung!
Black cloud, black squall, shrill raving gale,
Cold spray that whelms the shuddering sail,
Anguish that cannot find a tongue!

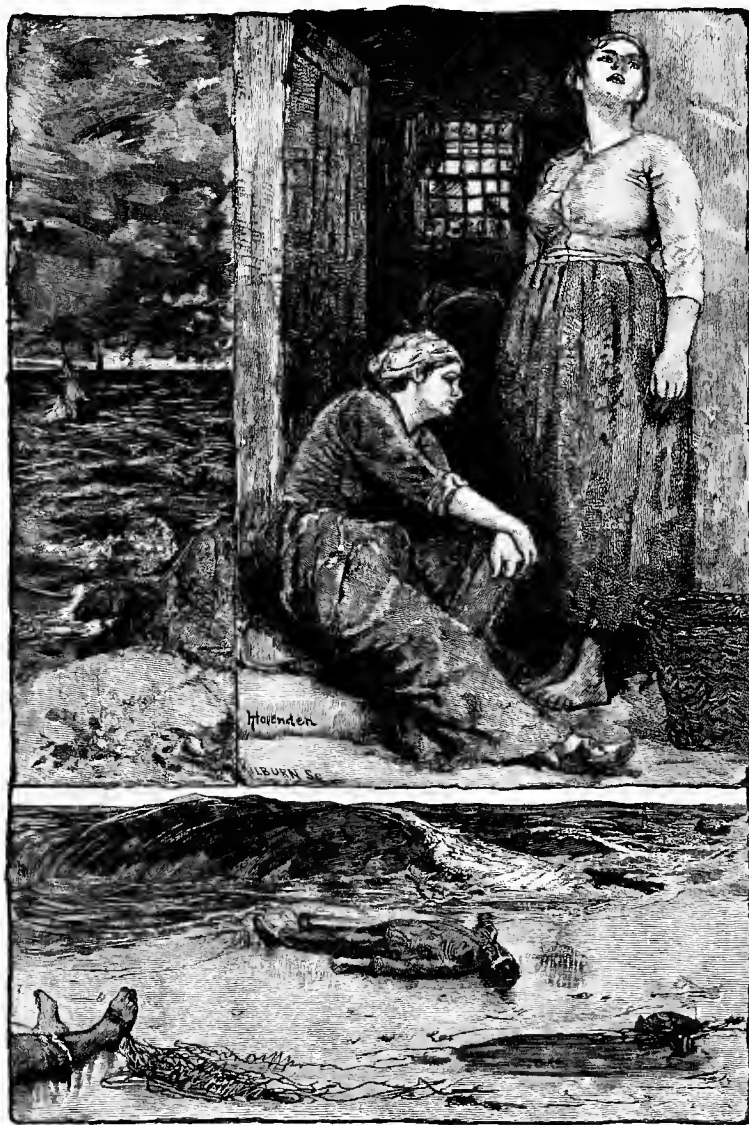
The low, fierce streak of threatening red
That lights the fury of the waves,
That lights the sailors to their graves,
Sends o'er the sea its shaft of dread;

And strikes athwart the solemn tower
Where helplessly before their fate
In speechless woe the women wait
The lapsing of the cruel hour.

No help, no hope in earth or air!
Torment of terror and suspense,
Passion of yearning so intense
To reach, to save! And then, despair.

Dull, crushing, colorless despair.
Drowned fathoms deep their sailors lie;
O well for them that they may die
And rest from toil in heaven's sweet air!

But these, who to their breasts have clung,
Of comfort and of joy bereft,
What haggard grief for them is left!
So must the heart of love be wrung!



ON EASTER DAY

ON EASTER DAY.

EASTER lilies! Can you hear
What they whisper, low and clear?
In dewy fragrance they unfold
Their splendor sweet, their snow and gold.
Every beauty-breathing bell
News of heaven has to tell.
Listen to their mystic voice,
Hear, oh mortal, and rejoice!
“Do you find us very fair?”
So was He, beyond compare.
White and dazzling pure are we,
Stainless, flawless? So was He.
Do you love our odorous breath?
Think on Him who conquered Death!
Richer than our perfume rise
The memories of His sacrifice,
Who turned from bliss to lift your woe,
And light the path wherein you go.
Beautiful the lilies shine,
Tokens of a life divine.
Precious are they, for they bring
Fresh remembrance of Love's King.
Hark, their soft and heavenly chime!
Christ is risen for all time!



CONNOISSEURS

CONNOISSEURS.

O look at the horses and people!
How they hurry and trample and fight!
And the smoke blowing over the steeple,—
O look, how the guns shine bright!
See this one, this soldier, he's swinging
His sword overhead in the air;
How the shot must be leaping and stinging!
See the men falling down everywhere!
Isn't this what the white folks call the war?
I wonder what they are doing it for.

And there's the big flag flying splendid,
White stars pretty red, pretty blue,
All torn. Do you think 'twill be mended,
And fly out again, good as new?
See the blue coats and gray coats,—I'm sorry
They bleed and they suffer and die;
What made all the fighting and worry?
Can you think of the reason why
They killed each other, the gray and the blue?
O dusky children, it was for you!



J. W. WOOD
1879

DAY DREAMS

DAY DREAMS.

ALL sparkling lies the wind-swept sea,
And murmurs silver-toned,
Beyond the gray old apple-tree
Where Beauty sits enthroned.
The morning sunshine bathes in gold
Her form, her garments' every fold;
Her gauzy scarf the sweet airs lift,
Soft lights and shadows o'er her drift;
A nymph, a goddess or a grace,
With dusky hair and pensive face—
Well may the sea sing silver-toned
To Grace and Beauty thus enthroned!

Green leaves, fresh scents, morn's mellow beams
Bring her a dream of bliss,
Summer herself the maiden seems,
Won by June's rosy kiss.
Clear sing the birds to charm her ear,
And drowsy bees are booming near;
Below her flit the butterflies
With peacock wings and emerald eyes,
And all things are in love with her
That round her smile and breathe and stir—
The very sea sings silver-toned
To Grace and Beauty thus enthroned!



EVENING

EVENING.

I AM the spirit of the dusk and dew:
Against the great disk of the golden moon
I float toward the starry deeps of blue,
While the bats flitter and the crickets croon.
From all the drowsy flowers their scent I charm
And breathe it wide upon the balmy air,
I summon from its dream the south wind warm,
My mystic messages abroad to bear:
I light the firefly's lamp, the glow-worm's spark,
To spangle with their gems the velvet dark.

For me the honeysuckles pour their sweets,
And mignonette yields up its odors pure;
I lift the jasmynes, faint with the noon heats,
And all the drooping blossoms I restore.
I hide the small bird's head beneath his wing;
The fairy webs spun from the spider's looms
With crystal drops of diamond dew I string.
I call the moths to flutter 'mid the blooms,
And send the rosy-wingèd sphinx to wheel
Among the phloxes, and their honey steal.

I hush the day's loud din: I beckon sleep
From the clear spaces of the solemn skies,
And shed it softly with refreshment deep
Upon the heavy lids of weary eyes.
I kiss the lips of lily and of rose,
And bow the scarlet poppy on its stalk,
And bid the corn-flowers blue their petals close,
Along the edges of the garden walk.
Lo! beautiful am I, beloved and blessed,
For to Earth's tired children I bring rest.



THE PIPERS

THE PIPERS.

WEE folk, glad folk, flocking gay
Down the green slope flowered with gold,
Whither bound, this summer day,
Troop of young musicians bold?
Over road and field and hill
Wandering, straying on together,
Laughing, babbling, piping still,
In the pleasant August weather!

Pretty discords rend the air,
From the hollow stalks outblown;
Grasshoppers the noise might share,
And the locust lend his tone:
To such shrill and grating sound
Crickets creak in unison,
Hidden on the grassy ground,
Shining shapes of black and dun.

Luck go with you, merry band,
Piping loud and piping low,
Making music in the land,
Sounds of joy where'er you go!
May you keep your morning cheer,
Moods of pure and peaceful mirth,
May you never, pipers dear,
Make worse discords on the earth!



A SUNNY NOOK

A SUNNY NOOK.

'MID bayberry, fern, sweet brier,
With many a nodding weed,
And the golden-rod's plume of fire,
I have made a nest indeed!
Against the earth's warm breast,
All fragrant with yielding moss
And spicy twigs, I rest,
While the leaves in the light airs toss,
And I feel a part of the good, glad earth
In her summer mood of joy and mirth.

O who would covet a throne
When a nook could be found like this
Any peasant might call his own,
With its boon of innocent bliss?
With the bird and the bee to share
Such largess of sunshine sweet,
Afar from the loud world's care,
And its turmoil of hurrying feet!
I envy no king in the world, not I,
As here on the earth's warm breast I lie!



THE MINUTE MEN

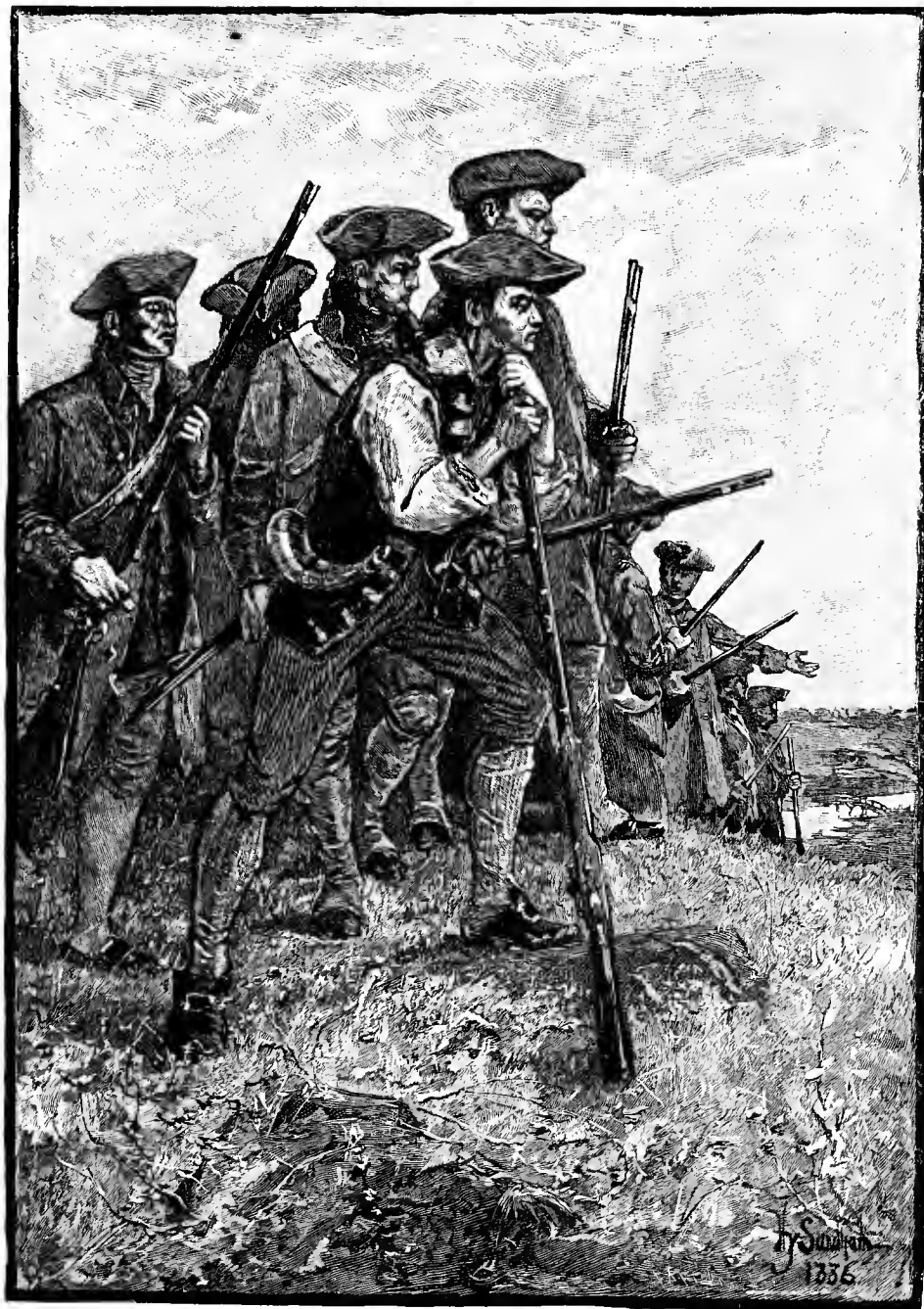
THE MINUTE MEN.

HEROES on History's height!

Who leaped at the first alarm,
To meet their death or to win the fight,
From forge and workshop and farm;
Seizing the ready gun,
With hearts on fire, to stand
For wife and child against the foe,
For home and their own dear land,
Resolute, every one,
To strike the mighty blow!

Firm as the solid rock

On Concord's soft green sward
Their feet are planted to meet the shock,
Love, honor and peace to guard,
To strike for Liberty!
For the signal shot they wait,
Dauntless and stern and still,
To wrench from the hand of fate
With the strength of an iron will,
Freedom and Victory!



LITTLE BROWN MAIDEN

•

LITTLE BROWN MAIDEN.

DEMURE and sweet!

Waiting with patience, all equipped,
Ready for travel, rosy-lipped
And azure-eyed, in garments quaint:—
What dost thou ponder, little saint?
Sitting serene, content and dumb,
Motionless till thy guide shall come,
For whom expectant thou dost wait
As here alone thou keep'st thy state,
All clothed in charms from head to feet,

Demure and sweet!

Demure and sweet!

Ah, when those little feet shall press
Beyond thy childhood's happiness,
And in the world's wide, stony ways
Wander through life's perplexing maze,
Sure am I thou the road wilt learn
That heavenward leads, nor wilt thou turn:
Those wistful eyes in spite of tears
Will find God's smile through all the years;
No shadow shall thy light defeat,

Demure and sweet!



VENETIAN BOAT SONG

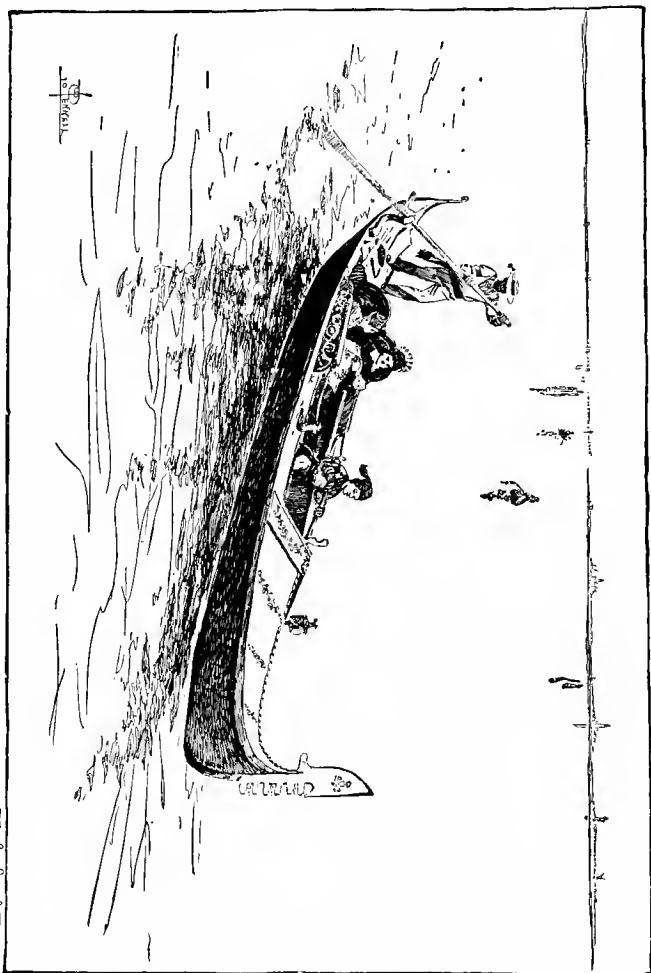
VENETIAN BOAT SONG.

Row, row, my gondolier,
About us far and near
Lies the golden peace and splendor of the after-
noon of May;
Through all its crystal deeps
The Adriatic sleeps,
Not a whisper on the water, not a shadow on the
day.

O the color! O the air!
O the far horizon fair,
Where a sail dreams in the distance on the softly
melting line;
Stoops the azure heaven above us
Tender as the eyes that love us,
And mirrors in the silent tide its cloudless blue
divine.

Behind us, miles and miles,
The fairy city smiles,
Steeped in the tranquil glory of the glowing
atmosphere,
Through the stillness so profound
Comes a tremulous sweet sound
From the slender campanile where the airy bells
ring clear.

Row, row, my gondolier,
Toward the sunset steer,
While the day droops and the heaven slowly gathers
hues of rose;
Through all its crystal deeps
The Adriatic sleeps,
While to rest beyond its waters the great sun
slowly goes.



Ship for the offering

IN THE TREE

IN THE TREE.

Up in the apple-tree old,
Crowned with a fleece of gold,
Clustering locks that shine in the sun,
Gleaming as if from its radiance spun —
The monarch sits at his ease,
Kissed by the wandering breeze,
Fanned by the fragrance of blossoms sweet
In the dew of the morning before the heat;
And the daisies bow and bend
At the foot of his low, broad throne,
And the light and the shadows blend
As the blossoming boughs are blown.

The world his kingdom is,
Its beauty and wonder and bliss;
Safe held by the hand of love he rests,
Love eagerly waiting his least behests.
All men his subjects are,
For he shines like the morning star:
Time moves to music and life is sweet,
In the dew of the morning before the heat;
And the daisies bow and bend
At the foot of his low, broad throne;
O would he could keep to the end
This joy of the morning his own!



THE SINGING LESSONS

THE SINGING LESSON.

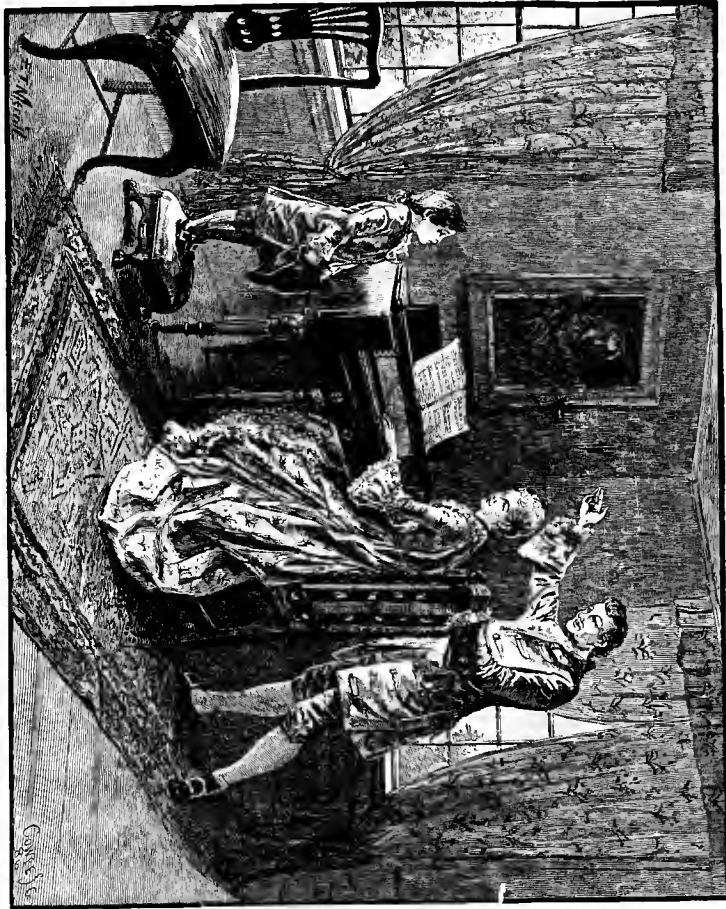
CLEAR and true, my little man;
Bravo! That's the way to sing!
Lift your voice and let it ring
Full and free, "God save the King!"
Shout it loudly as you can.

Clear and true. You'll never flat
Into lifeless tones and sour;
When your budding life shall flower,
Time and tune and truth and power
Will be yours, I'm sure of that.

Here and now is succor sweet:
Slender mother, graceful, fair,
Sottily plays the grand old air,
All the three the lesson share,
Father proud the time to beat.

By and by you'll stand alone,
Fight your battles, conquer Fate;
Difficulties, dangers wait
In the path, but soon or late
Fortune's smile you'll make your own.

Just the bravest that you can
You will do, 'tis plain to see;
Whatsoever the task may be,
You will win the victory,
Fill the measure of a man.

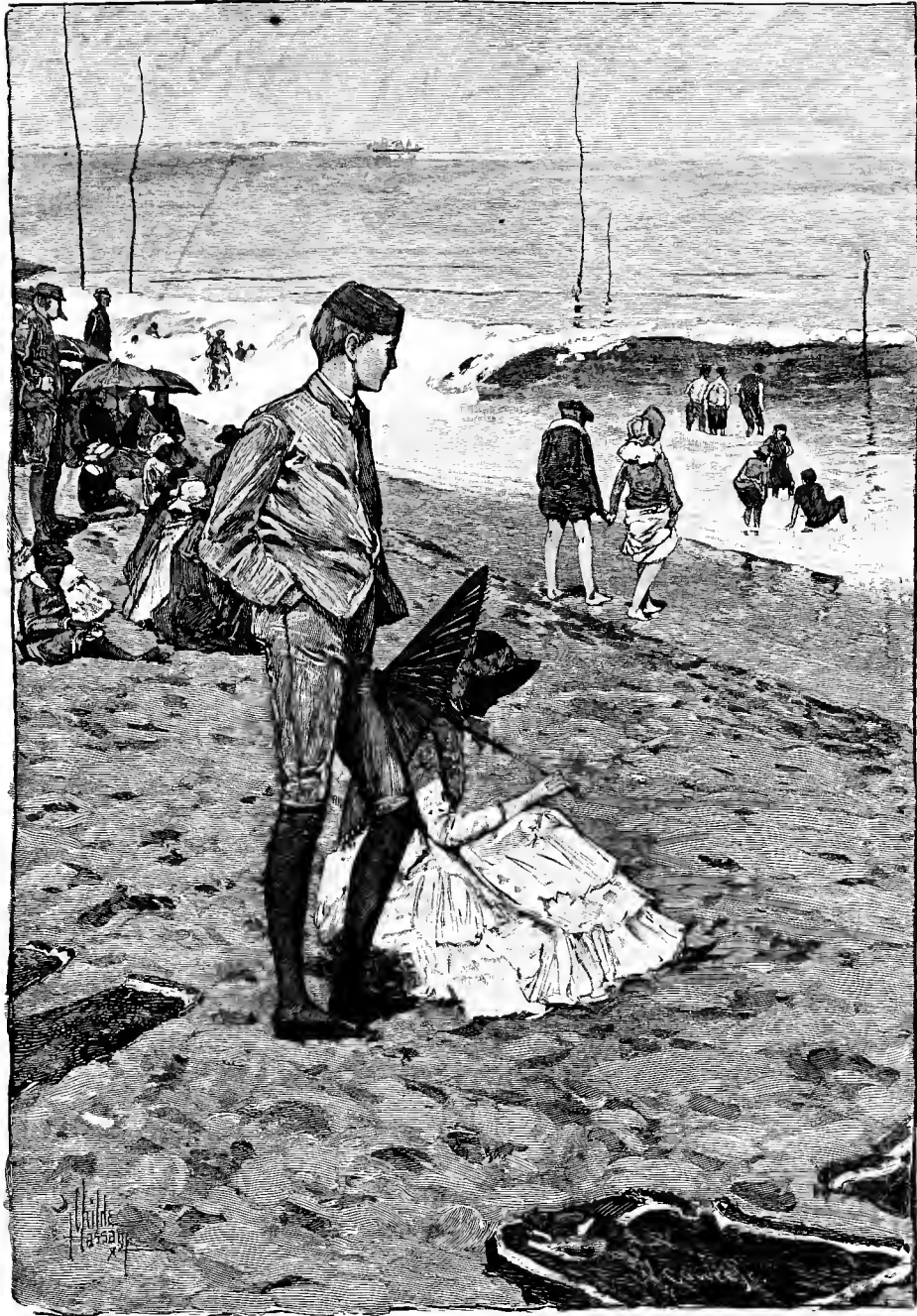


ON THE BEACH

ON THE BEACH.

THE slow, cool, emerald breaker curving clear
Along the sparkling edge of level sand,
Shatters its crystal arch, and far and near
In broken splendor spills upon the land.
With rush and whisper siren-sweet and soft
Gently salutes the children of the earth,
And catching every sunbeam from aloft
Flashes it back in summer mood of mirth;
And with a flood of strong refreshment pours
Health and delight along the sounding shores.

Amid its frolic foam and scattered spray
Tossed lightly, like some dreaming lion's mane,
The tired dwellers of the city play,
Forgetful for awhile of care and pain,
While peace broods over all, nor does it seem
As if the sleeping lion could awake;
And yet, when passed is this sweet summer dream,
What roar of thunder on the coast will break
When winter's tempests rage in sullen wrath —
Death and disaster in their cruel path —
And hurl against the sandy margin gray
Devouring fury, tumult and dismay!



*UNDER THE
ELECTRIC LIGHT*

UNDER THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

How cold and still! The keen, clear air
Sparkles with snow-dust crystalline;
To right, to left, and everywhere
The great lamps of the city shine.
Against the distant darkness dense
The huge electric torches blaze,
Colorless suns of light intense
That send on every side their rays;
White, blinding orbs that dazzling flare
O'er the cold snow with colder glare.

In years gone by, when lightning flashed
Piercing the sky with zigzag fire,
And at its heels the thunder crashed
Pealing through heaven, an awful choir,
Men little thought this mighty king
Among the elements could be
Their friend! Nay, a more humble thing,
Their slave, to serve them faithfully,
Fetch news and carry, go and come,
And meekly light their children home!

I wonder, in this latter time,
If any ponder on the man
Whose mind, persistent and sublime,
So far before his century ran.
His genius high the sages mocked,
They jeered at him who calmly cast
His pearls before them and unlocked
The treasures of a knowledge vast.
But still he scaled heaven's dizzy height,
To bring us the electric light!



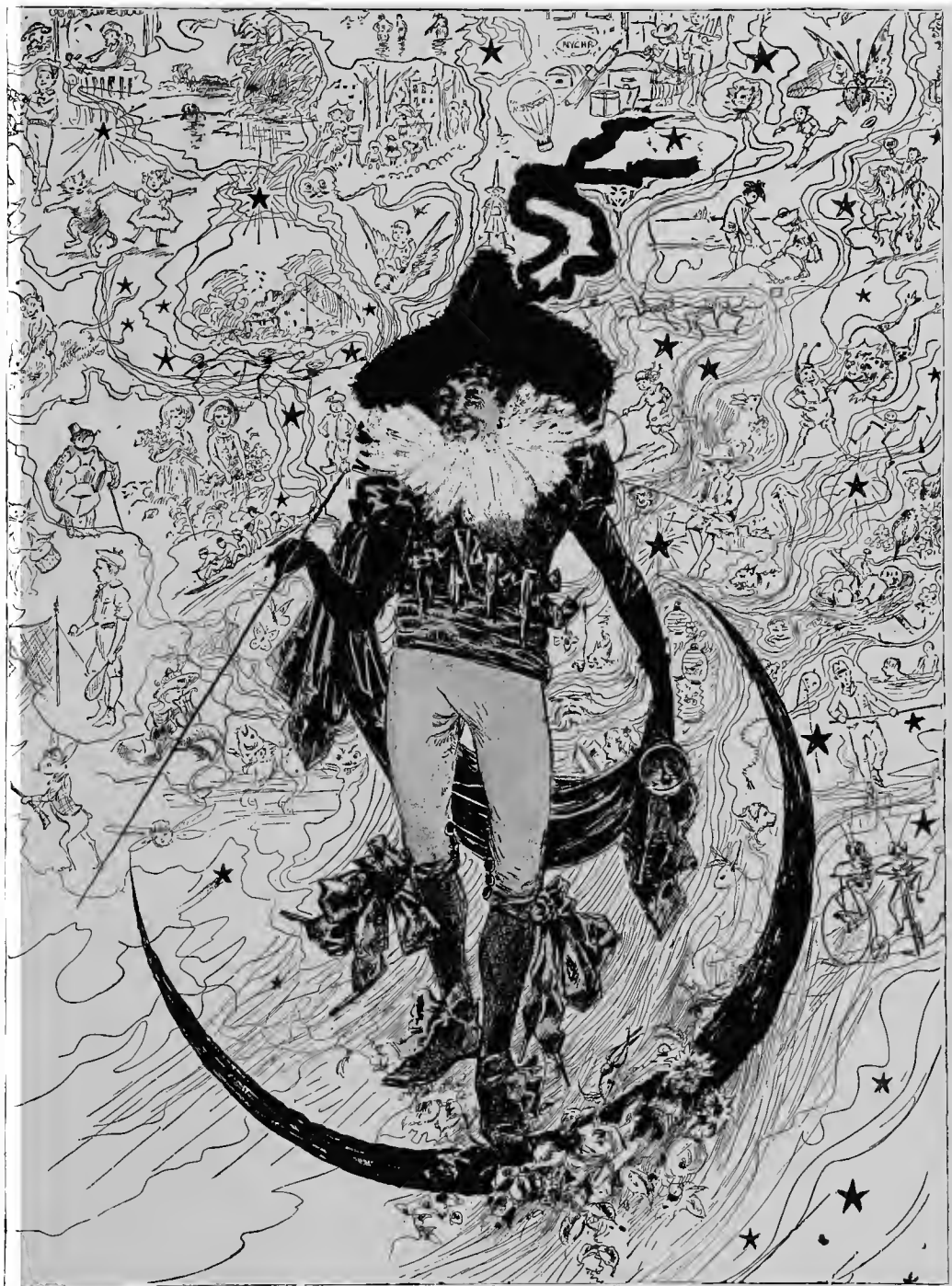
THE DREAM PEDLER

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Lo, I come from dreamland dim,
Down the drowsy air I swim,
Ringing soft a pleasant tune,
Through the sharp horns of the moon;
All that fancy fine can paint
Of fair or sweet or wild or quaint,
Through your brain I'll set adrift,
When my slender wand I lift.

Hark, what fairy breezes blow!
Tinkles ice and flutters snow,
Mingled with the summer dreams
Of lilies white on placid streams;
You shall woo a mermaid fair,
You shall fright the imp of care,
'Twixt a dove's wings you shall ride,
Down a cloud-bank you shall slide!

You shall fill a wind-rocked nest,
In a witch's palace rest,
You shall gather flowers afield,
You shall wear a turtle's shield,
By a butterfly be snared,
By a tiny kobold scared;
You shall soar in a balloon,
You shall dance in magic shoon;
Which will suit you? Pause and choose
Ere my visions I unloose.



ON QUIET WATERS

ON QUIET WATERS.

O LIGHTLY moored the lilies lie.
And look up to the golden sky.
Softly they breathe into the air
Their holy fragrance everywhere:
Delicate, dewy-fresh and sweet,
It steals our charmèd sense to greet.
In each pure chalice, dazzling white,
Sits throned a spirit of delight
Our grateful souls with joy to fill,
A pleasure sacred, deep and still,
O lightly moored the lilies lie
Afloat beneath the glowing sky!

From shadow cool to sunshine clear
Safe past the changing shores we steer,
And watch the swallow dip his wing,
And hear the hidden thrushes sing
Each to his mate within the wood,
Safe in their happy solitude.
O perfect morn! O peaceful time!
O life that blossoms at its prime!
We dream in Eden, thou and I,
Afloat beneath the golden sky.



